the minister and the scourge have blended themselves into a single human essence; the cause of the maturing of his selfhood is his refinement of consciousness. Sent to be the manipulator of human beings as puppets, Strether becomes *their* puppet until at last his own refinement is achieved. But once it is achieved, the role and the actor fuse into one in him, while in others they are kept apart, distinct, and mutually unfructifying. Strether outgrows the commonplaces of self-dramatisation, and histrionic messianism, while the others do not, because they live in a world sharply divided between the puppets and the string-pullers.

Gostrey has taught Strether never to make up his mind about anything hastily, but to wait, see, and then judge. Strether profits by this lesson, as it enables him to view the American and European modes of life objectively, and arrive at a comparative appraisal of their strengths and weaknesses. Life in Wooliett is bad, but even the life of Paris is not all good. Behind the dazzle and glitter of the art, beauty and manners of Europe is the sordidness of immorality and the ugliness of insensitivity. Europe's lack of moral seriousness has made her charm and distinction merely a superficial one. For Western civilization what is wanting in terms of refinement is the integration of art and morals. Henry James deplores the disintegration of Western civilization by the divorcing of art from morals, and vice versa. Morality, without the liberating and humanizing influence of art, tends to become rigid, prohibitive and uncreative; art, without a sound basis in morality, tends to become a fetishistic source of evil and corruption.

The international contrast is thus presented by Henry James iri-te r-ms of the growth of Strether's awareness of the American and European modes of life. From the total nature and quality of Strether's experience emerges his understanding of human life and reality. Born as men are to sin, no man is completely exempt from the generic stains of the human race. Human weakness does

not
provoke Strether's contempt, but gains his sympathy and understanding.
He attains that state of compassionate understanding which enables
one to view life objectively and dispassionately, without depriving
oneself either of the heights, or the depths of life. The sordid affair
of Mme. Vionnet with Chad does not lead Strether to treat them with
contempt. He is able to understand and sympathise with her
"abysmal!, pitiful" passion for Chad, and hence it is that he advises
Chad not to desert her brutishly, but to be loyal and grateful to **her.**